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THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE

CITE TDCS-314/04829-71

DIST 7 MAY 1971

COUNTRY LAOS/NORTH VIETNAM/SOUTH VIETNAM  
COI 27 JANUARY - 8 FEBRUARY 1968  
SUBJECT SIGHTING OF THREE UNIDENTIFIED U.S. POWS IN AN  
NVA/PL PRISON IN THE LAO/SOUTH VIETNAM BORDER  
AREA IN EARLY 1968.

ACQ LAOS, VIENTIANE 14-5 MAY 1971/ [REDACTED]

SOURCE [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER

IN 329074

TDCS -314/04629-71

PAGE 2 OF 8 PAGES

(classification)

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SUMMARY. DURING THE PERIOD 27 JANUARY TO 8 FEBRUARY 1968, THREE AMERICAN PRISONERS WERE OBSERVED IN A PRISON LOCATED IN BAN TARIEB, SOUTHEAST OF TCHEPONE NEAR THE LAOS/SOUTH VIETNAM BORDER. THE THREE AMERICAN PRISONERS WERE UNIDENTIFIED BUT APPEARED TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH. THE PRISON ALSO CONTAINED SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMY AND FOUR ETHNIC LAO PRISONERS. THE PRISON CONSISTED OF SIX BUILDINGS FASHIONED FROM LOCALLY OBTAINED MATERIALS AND WAS GUARDED BY PATHET LAO SOLDIERS SUPERVISED BY THREE NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS. THE AMERICANS REPORTEDLY RECEIVED THE SAME RATIONS AS THOSE GIVEN TO NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY FIELD GRADE OFFICERS, WHILE THE OTHER PRISONERS RECEIVED SUBSTANDARD RATIONS. THE AMERICAN PRISONERS WERE NOT SHACKLED AT ANY TIME BUT THE OTHER PRISONERS WERE SHACKLED BY HAND AND FOOT WHILE THEY SLEPT. END OF SUMMARY.

1. FROM 27 JANUARY TO 8 FEBRUARY 1968 THREE AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR /POW/ WERE OBSERVED IN A PRISON IN THE VICINITY OF BAN TARIEB /XD 974277/, ABOUT 74 KILOMETERS /KMS/ SOUTHEAST OF TCHEPONE /XD 3244/, NEAR THE LAOS/

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER

IN 329074

TDCS -314/04829-71

PAGE 3 OF 8 PAGES

(classification)

(dissem controls)

SOUTH VIETNAM BORDER.

A. ONE OF THE AMERICAN POWS WAS DESCRIBED AS BEING 40-45 YEARS OF AGE, 175 CENTIMETERS TALL, 85 KILOGRAMS IN WEIGHT, APPEARING TO HAVE A MEDIUM BUILD, HAVING A FAIR COMPLEXION, A NARROW FACE, REDDISH BROWN HAIR, BLUE EYES, WHITE TEETH, AND STRAIGHT POSTURE.

B. THE SECOND AMERICAN POW WAS DESCRIBED AS BEING APPROXIMATELY 40 YEARS OF AGE, 170 CENTIMETERS TALL, 80 KILOGRAMS IN WEIGHT, APPEARING SHORT AND STOUT, HAVING A REDDISH COMPLEXION, A FULL ROUND FACE, LARGE EARS WITH PENDULOUS EAR LOBES, A LONG MUSTACHE, STRAIGHT BLACK HAIR, BROWN EYES, WHITE TEETH, AND HAVING GOOD POSTURE.

C. THE THIRD POW WAS DESCRIBED AS BEING APPROXIMATELY 45 YEARS OLD, 165 CENTIMETERS TALL, WEIGHING 75 KILOGRAMS, HAVING A SLIGHT APPEARANCE, HAVING A FAIR COMPLEXION, A LONG AND NARROW FACE, REDDISH BROWN HAIR, BLUE EYES, WHITE TEETH, AND GOOD POSTURE.

D. NONE OF THE AMERICANS WORE ANY JEWELRY, WATCHES, EYEGLASSES, OR BOOTS.

E. SOURCE COMMENT. ALL OF THE AMERICANS APPEARED

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER

IN 329074

TDCS-314/04829-71

PAGE 4 OF 8 PAGES

(classification)

(dissem controls)

IN GOOD HEALTH AS THEY MOVED ABOUT THE COMPOUND. NO MENTION OF NAMES OR RANKS WAS HEARD BY THE OTHER POWS.

2. [REDACTED] COMMENT.

A. ACCORDING TO CURRENT ORDER OF BATTLE LISTINGS A PRISON WAS REPORTED AT XD 9026 IN NOVEMBER 1968. THE PRISON CONTAINED 73 UNIDENTIFIED DETAINEES AND WAS GUARDED BY TWO ENEMY COMPANIES. IN SEPTEMBER 1968 ANOTHER PRISON, CONTAINING 38 PRISONERS, WAS REPORTED IN THE THE XD 9628 VICINITY. THIS PRISON CONSISTED OF SIX HOUSES AND WAS GUARDED BY SIX PATHET LAO /PL/ TROOPS. NO AMERICAN WERE REPORTED IN EITHER PRISON.

B. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] DID NOT REVEAL ANY INDICATIONS OF A POW CAMP IN THE BAN TARBIEB AREA, WHICH CONTAINED NUMEROUS SLASH AND BURN PLOTS WITH A FEW LIGHTLY USED FOOT TRAILS TRAVERSING THE COUNTRYSIDE. THE ENTIRE AREA HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO REPEATED AIR STRIKES.

C. DUE TO THE LENGTH OF TIME SINCE OBSERVING THE AMERICANS, SOURCE'S MEMORY MAY NOT BE COMPLETELY CLEAR AS TO THE IDENTIFYING PHYSICAL FEATURES SUCH AS HEIGHT, EYE [REDACTED]

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER

IN 329074

TDCS-314/04829-71

PAGE 5 OF 8 PAGES

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(classification) (dissem controls)  
COLOR AND AGE.)

3. THE PRISON CONSISTED OF SIX BUILDINGS, MADE OF LOCALLY AVAILABLE WOOD AND THATCH, AND MEASURING APPROXIMATELY SIX BY THREE METERS. THE PRISON WAS GUARDED BY 20 ETHNIC LAO THEUNG PL GUARDS SUPERVISED BY THREE NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY /NVA/ SOLDIERS OF UNKNOWN RANK. ALSO DETAINED AT THE PRISON WERE 60 ETHNIC SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMY SOLDIERS, 57 SOUTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS OF CAMBODIAN EXTRACTION, AND FOUR ETHNIC LAO. THE PRISON CONTAINED AN INNER COURT IN WHICH FOUR BUILDINGS WERE PLACED. THESE BUILDINGS WERE SURROUNDED BY A BAMBOO FENCE WITH SHARPENED TOPS. THE DIAMETER OF THIS COURT WAS APPROXIMATELY 50 METERS. THE THREE AMERICANS WERE KEPT IN ONE OF THE BUILDINGS, WHILE THE REMAINING PRISONERS WERE HELD IN THE OTHER. ONE OF THE OTHER TWO BUILDINGS IN THE INNER COURT WAS USED AS A LATRINE AND OTHER AS A KITCHEN. THE INNER COURT HAD A GATE AT WHICH A GUARD WAS STATIONED AT ALL TIMES. OUTSIDE THE INNER COURT WAS AN OUTER CIRCLE 20 METERS ACROSS WHICH CONTAINED THE OTHER TWO BUILDINGS IN WHICH THE GUARD FORCE WAS QUARTERED. THIS COURT WAS ALSO

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER

IN 329074

TDCS -314/04829-71

PAGE 6 OF 8 PAGES

(classification)

(dissem controls)

SURROUNDED BY A BANBOD FENCE WITH SHARPENED TOPS.

4. THE LAO THEUNG GUARDS TOLD THE ETHNIC LAO PRISONERS THAT THE AMERICAN POWS WERE TREATED MUCH BETTER THAN THE OTHER PRISONERS. THEY WERE NOT SHACKLED EITHER BY DAY OR NIGHT AND WERE ALLOWED TO EXERCISE IN THE PRISON COURTYARD. THE AMERICAN POWS RECEIVED THREE CUPS OF BOILED RICE PER PERSON PER MEAL AND THIS WAS SUPPLEMENTED BY CANNED MEAT OR FISH AND FRESH VEGETABLES. THESE RATIONS WERE PURPORTED TO BE THE SAME AS RECEIVED BY NVA FIELD GRADE OFFICERS AND WERE SUBSTANTIALLY BETTER THAN THOSE RECEIVED BY THE OTHER PRISONERS. THE LAO THEUNG GUARDS EXPLAINED THAT THE AMERICANS RECEIVED BETTER RATIONS BECAUSE THEY WERE SENT TO FIGHT IN SOUTH VIETNAM AGAINST THEIR WILL BY THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WHILE THE OTHER PRISONERS WERE VOLUNTEERS AND THEREFORE TREATED WORSE.

5. THE AMERICANS WERE NOT SEEN BY THE OTHER PRISONERS EXCEPT DURING THE EARLY MORNING AND LATE EVENING, BUT THE LAO THEUNG GUARDS SAID THAT THEY WERE WELL TREATED AND WERE NOT SHACKLED. THE OTHER PRISONERS NEVER SAW A GUARD MIS- TREAT AN AMERICAN POW AND FROM ALL THAT COULD BE OBSERVED

# DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND CENTER  
MESSAGE CENTER

IN 329074

TDCS -314/04829-71

PAGE 7 OF 8 PAGES

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THE AMERICANS RECEIVED GENERALLY BETTER TREATMENT. THE AMERICANS WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN IN THE PRISON FOR THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO 27 JANUARY 1968, AND TO HAVE LEFT DURING THE DAY OF 8 FEBRUARY. THEIR DEPARTURE WAS NOT SEEN BY THE OTHER PRISONERS WHO WERE WORKING IN THE PRISON GARDEN. THE LAO THEUNG GUARDS REPORTED THAT THE AMERICANS HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO HANOI ALONG WITH THE 60 SOUTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS.

6. DURING THE HOURS OF DARKNESS THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE, THE LAO, AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE OF CAMBODIAN EXTRACTION PRISONERS WERE SHACKLED TO A LARGE LOG AND WORE WOODEN HANDCUFFS. THE DAILY ROUTINE FOR THESE PRISONERS BEGAN AT APPROXIMATELY 0600 HOURS IN THE MORNING WHEN THEY WERE AWAKENED, UNSHACKLED, AND FED BREAKFAST. BREAKFAST WAS VERY MEAGER, CONSISTED OF APPROXIMATELY EIGHT OUNCES OF RICE MIXED IN HOT WATER, AND WAS SHARED BY SIX PEOPLE. AFTER BREAKFAST THE NON-AMERICAN PRISONERS WERE TAKEN OUTSIDE THE COMPOUND WHERE THEY WORKED UNDER GUARD UNTIL APPROXIMATELY 1700 HOURS, WHEN THEY WERE RETURNED TO THE COMPOUND. WHILE IN THE GARDEN THE PRISONERS WERE ABLE TO

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
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MESSAGE CENTER

IN 329074

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SUPPLEMENT THEIR DIET BY EATING SMALL INSECTS AND EDIBLE PLANTS. THEIR DINNER WAS IDENTICAL TO BREAKFAST, OCCASIONALLY WITH SOME VEGETABLES INCLUDED. PRISONERS WERE THEN RESHACKLED AND ALLOWED TO SLEEP.

7. [REDACTED] DISSEM. STATE ARMY AIR CINCPAC ARPAC PACAF  
PACFLT MACV/JPRC 7TH AF 7/13TH AF TFA/NKP 7TH RRFS [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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